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SUBJECT: SPECIAL MEDIA REACTION: IRAQI EDITORIAL SUMMARY,  
AUGUST 16, 2005

SUMMARY: The major editorial themes in Iraqi newspapers on August 16, 2005 focused on the constitution; specifically the issues of federalism, the role of Shari'a, federalism and the lack of sound economic policy.  
END SUMMARY.

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COMMENTARIES  
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- [1A.](#) "Our Constitution in a Free Space Now"  
(Al-Adala Newspaper (SCIRI) in Arabic P 2 Article by Dhia Abdul-Razak)

The author believes that Islam and Shari'a should be the primary source for the new constitution and its laws, but not the only source. He claims to represent the educated Muslim Shi'a of Iraq and indicates that they support current Iraqi government policy. He states that SCIRI and most Shi'a want a strong inclusion of Islam in the new government, but do not want a government similar to that in Iran. He urges the reader to give the drafting committee enough time to properly finish a constitution that the public will appreciate and respect. "The average Iraqi is anxious for the constitutional draft announcement, as it represents a decisive moment for the political future of Iraq."

The constitution differs from others in the Arab and third world, as it is being drafted under mutual free will and a democratic process after decades of a dictatorial government. All Iraqi political blocs, sects and even individuals have been free to participate in the drafting of the constitution, and express their demands. It is natural that there will be disagreements and compromises that will result in the need for more time. However, a thoughtful and deliberate process will result in a strong, healthy constitution, capable of assisting the Iraqis in weather their current and future crises.

- [1B.](#) "Economical Notes about the Iraqi Constitution"  
(Al-Mutamar Newspaper in Arabic Article by Kamil Abbas Mahdy)

The author criticizes the initial draft of the constitution, stating that it fails to protect the economic rights of Iraqis. He states that the language in the constitution fails to give the national wealth of Iraq to all of the people, rather it relates the wealth directly to the provinces. "It fails to address important points such as environmental protection and proper financial administration." He specifically refers to section three, item 6a, where the draft constitution addresses the government's responsibility for preparing general budget and development plans, and indicates that it should include a general financial policy for the country, including the provinces, governorates and governmental directorates. He says that it does not adequately address the government's responsibility in identifying commercial policies, capital transfer and organizing the economical environment's policies. He also says the constitution draft fails to clarify the government's responsibility to address economic and social issues like unemployment, social insurance, human resources development and public services, besides woman rights. "The shape of the drafted constitution is not good for a modern country."

- [1C.](#) "The Meaning of Federalism"  
(Al-Mashriq Newspaper in Arabic P 7 Editorial by Shamil Abdul Qadir)

"Iraqi politicians do not have a clear and specific understanding of federalism. For a majority of Iraqi politicians, it is simply a word that they are being told to agree with or disagree with. Many politicians do not distinguish between federalism and non-centralism, autonomy and local government, or between administrative and provincial federalism. Also, there are some who do not discriminate between independence and separation when discussing Iraqi national identity." The author goes on to claim that the Kurds have the right to oppose putting federalism to a vote because at this time both the politicians and the Iraqi people do not fully understand federalism.

The author supports the Kurdish idea of federalism saying, "Why should we oppose federalism in Iraq while this experiment has been successful in many other countries?" He indicates that the Kurdish leaders do not want to separate from Iraq. "There is no statement for any Kurdish leader now or in the past that calls for separation. These accusations come from Iran and Turkey."

#### **D. "About the Constitution Too"**

(Al-Zaman Newspaper in Arabic P 6 by Mohammed Sa'doun Al Sbahi)

"All of Iraq's political leaders should participate in writing the constitution." The author says that the few people who are writing it now were elected last January 30th. Iraq's elections caused a lot a trouble for the Iraqis. It doesn't matter that these problems are common for new democracies especially when it is being attempted in a country that suffered under a totalitarian nightmare for over three decades. The writer warns that the Sunnis, Shiites, Turkomen, Kurds, or Assyrians want to control their own interests. It is important for everyone in Iraq to participate in writing the constitution because it is a national privilege.

#### **E. "Federalism Experience Success in Iraq"**

(Al-Zaman in Arabic P15 Article by Laila Al-Jnabi)

The author states that the success of Iraq's federal system depends upon the government adopting the opinions of the majority. She stresses that the government must begin political programs that ensure Iraq's unity. She supports the idea of federalism by saying "since our country is made up of many religions, many ethnicities and many cultures, federalism ensures Iraq's unity."

#### **F. "Our Constitution . . . Our Future"**

(Baghdad Newspaper in Arabic P 3 a reaction editorial to the Al-Iraqiya show "Our Constitution...Our Future" by Ahmed Al-Hili)

"There is a concern among many moderate Iraqis who don't want religion to be included in every aspects of life, that the constitution places too much emphasis on religion," the author states. This is especially true for secularists and the people who hold views that can be considered leftists. He criticizes the show "Our Constitution . . . Our Future," because the hosts were chosen from the Iraqi Alliance List which means they represent a particular point of view that is against pluralism. He added that most of the guests (members of the National Assembly) debated with their counterparts in an unfair manner. They pretended to be smarter than them, and made decisive judgments about what Islam allows and what is prohibits. It's worth mentioning, the author says, that the National Assembly representatives (all are from IAL) tried to infer that Iraq is different than other countries. They also said that issues such as personal freedom, establishing human rights, and emphasizing the role civil society and intellectual pluralism are impossible in our society as they go against our values, customs and traditions.

#### **G. "Federalism and the Unified Iraq"**

(Al-Sabah Newspaper in Arabic P 27 Article by Muhammad Mehdi Alasifi)

The author states that he rejects federalism. He cannot accept the idea of Iraq being split up into parts. However, he believes that it is the legal right for the Kurds, the Shi'is and the Sunnis to govern themselves. The Kurds and the Shi'is are important members of Iraq's society. They share the same sufferings and had their culture, their language, their civilization, and their traditions denied to them during the reign of Saddam Hussein. The author stresses that Iraq is made up of many parts and federalism will only lead to division and separation.